CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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Statement by the President of the Republic of Chile
Presented on 29 November 1967 to the co-Chairmen of the
Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament

Statement by the President of Chile
31 October 1967

"In view of various publications regarding the situation of Latinamerican armament, the Government of Chile wishes to express its opinion as follows.

Chile neither supports nor sponsors disarmament of the Latinamerican countries.

The military institutions represent a vital element in life of our countries and constitute the warranty of internal and external security, of public order and national sovereignty, and for this reason they must maintain the necessary level of efficiency to fulfil their important task.

Different, however, is to fall into a militaristic career.

Our Government, as well as the former one, supports the necessity to restrict the acquisition of armaments, because otherwise we could precipitate ourselves into a competition, the political, economical and social consequences of which would be of greatest seriousness, since no country, without risking its own security, could exclude itself from that competition.

It is inconceivable that while on one part we are supporting economical integration of our nations as the main objective, on the other part we should initiate a policy of unlimited acquisition of armaments.

This situation would be even more inexplicable if we think that weapons so acquired would have no other sense than to defend ourselves against a possible attack from the same neighbour countries which are at present engaged in the struggle for economical integration. Notwithstanding the high costs of such weapons they would not be of the latest technological standards and in any case suitable in the event of a world war, which moreover in our days would be absolutely out of control for our countries.

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On the other hand, a warlike preparation means an economical and social decision. It is absolutely incompatible for our people to support simultaneously an accelerated effort of economical and social development in order to extirpate misery, bring education to a high level, build housings, improve health conditions, develop agriculture and industry and create full employment and to pay the costs of uncontrolled armament competition.

Furthermore, unanimously and solemnly all American Presidents assembled in Punta del Este support the above mentioned attitude in connexion with the acquisition of armaments. It seems appropriate to reproduce their declaration:

> "The Latinamerican Presidents, well aware of the importance of the armed forces for the maintenance of security, recognize at the same time that the requirements of economical development and social progress make it necessary to apply to that purpose the maximum of the available resources in Latin America".
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> "Consequently, they express their intention to restrict military expenses in proportion to the real requirements of national security and in accordance with the constitutional dispositions of each country, avoiding such costs which are not indispensable for the fulfilment of the specific tasks of the armed forces and, should this be the case, of international commitments that bound the respective governments".
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> "As regards the Treaty of Abolishment of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, they express their wish that it will come into force as soon as possible, once the requirements of this Treaty are fulfilled".

This declaration was based on the philosophy inspiring the Alliance for Progress. To act otherwise would mean to destroy its basic grounds and conception.

The Government of Chile, when making this statement, does not pretend to judge nor to refer to resolutions adopted by any of the States within the scope of its sovereignty. It has no reproach nor complaint against any nation of the hemisphere. Chile respects them and seeks their friendship, convinced that only economic integration and co-operation between our countries can open us a wide road of progress, justice and social peace.

We are guided only by the strong wish to seek, considering the reality and necessary outfit of the Armed Forces, agreements enabling us to put into practice the declaration of Punta del Este in order to devote fundamentally our resources to the economical and social development which our people require so urgently.

We do not pretend ourselves to provoke a meeting to consider this problem. We just want to point out to all friendly people and governments in Latin America that our Government is open and well disposed to participate in any high level meeting that should be held or proposed by any country with this purpose.

Not to act immediately would bring along evident dangers. It would mean a deep senselessness between the facts and the declarations and would compel us to esteem valueless the established machinery intended to unite and to assure ourselves peace."